

# The Library Assistant:

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## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Editorials and Announcements ... ..	93
Inter-Library Relations. By R. Howarth ... ..	97
Easter Vacation School, Florence ... ..	104
The Librarian of the City of London Retires ... ..	106
The Divisions ... ..	107
Books of the Month ... ..	109
Correspondence, etc. ... ..	112

## EDITORIALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

**Reading Meeting, May 26th.**—In our last issue we announced that the Association would visit Reading on May 12th. We now have to say that the date will be altered to May 26th, the reason being that on May 12th, the authorities will be occupied in entertaining the Prince of Wales whose visit to Reading has been deferred to that date. We would remind our readers that the railway fare to Reading will be 4s. 6d., and that members will be at no expense for refreshments. Members who intend to go are asked to send the money by May 15th, to Mr. R. Wright, Public Library, 378, Garratt Lane, Earlsfield, S. W. 18, and to state whether they wish to use the morning or afternoon train. The full programme will be as follows:—

- 9.45 a.m. Leave Paddington.
- 10.30 a.m. Arrive at Reading Station, where the Party will be met by the Chairman of the Public Libraries Committee (Alderman F. A. Cox, J. P.), and members of the Libraries Staff, and proceed to the Central Library where refreshments will be provided by the Libraries Staff.
- 11 a.m. Walk by way of Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins to Messrs. Huntley and Palmers' Biscuit Factory (due at 11.15), where the Party will be shown over the Works, by kind permission of the Directors. On the return journey the Party will be conducted round the Abbey Ruins by Alderman F. A. Cox.
- 1.15 p.m. Luncheon at the Town Hall, by kind invitation of His Worship the Mayor of Reading, L. G. Sutton, Esq., C.B.E., J.P.
- 2.15 p.m. Proceed by tram-car to Messrs. Sutton & Sons' Seed Trial Ground.
- 2.45 p.m. Afternoon train will leave Paddington, arriving at Reading at 3.26 p.m. Members arriving by this train will proceed to University of Reading, London Road. Erleigh Road cars from Broad Street pass the University.

- 4 p.m. The Party will visit the University of Reading and tour the University and Grounds, and inspect the University Library, under the guidance of S. A. Peyton, Esq., Librarian, after which the University Authorities will entertain the company to tea.
- 5.45 p.m. The Association's Meeting will be held in the History Room at the University.  
Six five-minute papers will be read and discussed. The audience will then be invited to guess the authors' names before these are divulged.  
Chairman: W. H. Greenhough, Esq., F.L.A., Chief Librarian, Reading Public Libraries.
- 8 p.m. Train leaves Reading, arriving at Paddington 8.45 p.m.

**The Kingston Meeting.**—In spite of somewhat threatening weather, about sixty members and friends arrived for the Kingston meeting on April 21st. Assembling at the railway station at 3.30, we were conducted on a fascinating tour round Kingston by Mr. B. Carter, F.L.A., Borough Librarian, who discoursed in scholarly fashion on the old parish church and other historical spots visited in this ancient town. Arriving at the Library by way of the delightful River Promenade and Canbury Gardens, we were welcomed and entertained to tea in the Art Gallery, by G. D. Densham, Esq., Mayor of Kingston, and his daughter, the Mayoress. Miss Densham has the distinction of being the youngest Mayoress in the country, and combines charmingly the duties of that office, with those of a schoolgirl.

Mr. R. Wright thanked the Mayor and Mayoress for their hospitality and his expression of gratitude was eloquently seconded by Mr. W. B. Thorne. In reply, the Mayor and the Deputy Chairman of the Library Committee, expressed their great pleasure at welcoming the Association to Kingston.

In the evening the proceedings opened with a well attended meeting of the Junior Section at which Miss P. M. Riches, St. Marylebone, contributed an interesting paper entitled "More About the Junior Section," which caused some discussion. At 7 p.m., Mr. B. Carter, F.L.A., Borough Librarian, Kingston, took the Chair, and Mr. Hilary Jenkinson, M.A., F.S.A., commenced what proved to be an extremely instructive hour in describing and illustrating by lantern slides the work of the Public Record Office. Beginning with a brief historical sketch of the provision made in different centuries for the conservation of public records, the lecturer next considered the various kinds of record and their several uses in research, and finally dealt with the development of hand-writing and script, his remarks on court-hand being of particular interest. Throughout, Mr. Jenkinson mingled wit with his great learning, and made his audience realise the intense human interest of the subject. It was a most enjoyable evening, and members will be glad to know that Mr. Jenkinson is going to send us a précis of his remarks for publication. At the conclusion, Mr. F. E. Sandry, an old student of Mr. Jenkinson's, in a few well-chosen words, moved a

hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Jenkinson, which was carried unanimously. The Honorary Secretary followed, and on behalf of the Association thanked Mr. Carter and his staff for the extremely good day they had arranged for us at Kingston. Mr. Carter, despite his 73 years, had worked hard to make everything a success, and those who were present know that he did succeed, and that the Association's best thanks to him and to his staff were indeed well merited.

The **Next Meeting** of the Council will be held at St. Bride's Institute on Wednesday, 19th May, at 3 p.m.

The **Annual Meeting** will be held at University College, Gower Street, on 16th June.

"**What the Libraries are Doing**" is the title given to a series of lengthy articles which have appeared in the *Manchester City News*. Towns in the vicinity of Manchester have been visited and their library resources described, accompanied by an illustration.

**Business Books.**—The attention of assistants is drawn to a bibliography compiled by Ethel Cleland: "Significant Business Books of a Year," which appears in the *Library Journal*, 15th April, 1926.

**Prospective Members** are reminded of Rule 4(a): "Persons joining the Association after March of any year, shall be required to pay only half the annual subscription, then in force, for the financial year ending September."

**New Libraries.**—Scarborough intends to proceed with its scheme despite failure to secure immediate assistance from the Carnegie Trustees. The erection of a new library and museum at Grantham is sufficiently advanced for arrangements to be made for formal opening on May 6th. Brighton has opened a separate Children's library; it has been established in what was formerly the magazine room.

**Rural Libraries.**—Northumberland has made arrangements for 85 centres; 33 have already commenced operations. East Sussex now has 85 centres at work, and the Carnegie Trustees have promised a supplementary book grant of £550. The organisation of the Surrey scheme is proceeding; 70 centres have been arranged. Lancashire, where 87 centres are in operation, is increasing its book fund from £3,700 to £5,000. It is hoped to have a stock of 20,000 vols. circulating by the end of next year. Much information regarding the work of the rural libraries during the last year will be found in the *School Government Chronicle* for 27th March.

**East Grinstead** is progressing towards a public library though some anxiety has been expressed regarding the ultimate fate of the Literary Institute. Many small local authorities seem quite unaware

of the fact that they already contribute towards the county scheme, and would therefore be well advised to agitate for the establishment of a centre in their town or village.

**Gateshead's** new central library was opened at the end of March by the Earl of Elgin, Chairman of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. The library cost £23,000, of which the Trust supplied £16,500. The future policy of the Trust was outlined by the Earl of Elgin, who stated that they were discontinuing subsidising municipal libraries in favour of county and rural systems.

**The Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux** was inaugurated at the Institution of Mechanical Engineers on March 29th. The objects of the Association are to examine, foster and co-ordinate existing services; to develop the usefulness of special libraries and information bureaux, and generally promote the adequate dissemination and systematic use of published information. The inauguration did not pass off without a little breeze occasioned by the request of the Standing Committee that the meeting approve the constitution unseen. To us it seemed a curiously unbusinesslike request to emanate from a body of business men. A third conference is to be held at Balliol College, Oxford, in September, at which the A.A.L. will be represented.

**Work of the Council.**—The Council met at the National Library for the Blind on April 14th, the chair being occupied by the President (Mr. H. A. Sharp). Routine matters predominated in the reports of the various Committees although the Education Committee made its report interesting by including a statement showing the profit made on the Battersea dance and the announcement of the arrangements it had made for two cricket matches, one for ladies and one for gentlemen, in the early part of the forthcoming "Ashes" season. It may also be of interest to readers to know, while dealing with the work of this Committee, that it has been busy for some time past not only with the arrangements for the Annual General Meeting, but also the Inaugural Meeting for next session! General regret was expressed at receiving the resignation of the Association's Vice-President (Mr. R. W. Parsons, of Bradford), especially as it does not leave the Yorkshire Division much time in which to nominate a successor.

**Mr. H. M. Tomlinson** who resides in Croydon, has very kindly presented to the Croydon Public Libraries the manuscript, suitably bound, of his Inaugural address, "The Judging of Books."

**Cricket Match.**—The project of a cricket match of ladies *versus* gentlemen has been abandoned; but the following arrangements have been substituted:—June 2nd, Finchley, Islington ladies *versus* the Rest; June 23rd, Richmond Green at 3 p.m., Mr. R. Cooper's XI.

*versus* Mr. R. D. H. Smith's XI. There is still room for a few players in [the second match. Will those wishing to take part please write *at once* to Mr. R. D. H. Smith, Public Library, Richmond.

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### INTER - LIBRARY RELATIONS.\*

By R. HOWARTH, *Warrington Public Library.*

The title of my paper is a little unfortunate. It is not quite wide enough—co-operation being, perhaps, a better description.

Anyhow, it is the purpose of this paper to define, briefly, the work of the Public Library, and to outline, a little superficially perhaps, the various activities in which co-operation is possible and even desirable, and so work on to the Nationalisation theory. In covering so large a ground time will only allow me a mere mention of many topics which, in themselves, provide ample matter for a paper, but I do this so that we may discuss the whole in perspective and consider the feasibility of a general adoption.

To-day, public libraries are not regarded as mere fiction distributing centres to minister to a pleasure seeking public, as they were some few years ago. Now let it be at once understood, that I am not decrying fiction. Fiction plays a great part in life, and, intelligently read, confers many benefits upon mankind. But public libraries as we know them to-day have a far wider scope, broader views obtain as to their functions, and they are gradually gaining that position in the educational life of the nation which, of right, they are entitled to.

That the public library exists for the public service is very true to-day. We have clamouring at our doors, men, women, and children of all types of mind and variety of interests, and the satisfaction of the demands made upon him is the standing problem of the modern librarian.

In this connection Mr. Roebuck collected some very interesting figures in 1921. He calculated that there were 580 library systems in the Kingdom containing something like 14 million volumes, serving three million people with books to read in the home, and providing Reference facilities for over 250 million people. These are rather stupendous figures, but when he goes on to tell us that over 65 million books per annum are loaned out to readers at a cost of under one million pounds per annum, it becomes at once apparent that a great deal of work is done at a comparatively small cost.

From these figures, do we need assert, I wonder, that Public libraries have a great place to fill in the social, artistic, and intellectual life of the community.

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\* Read at Warrington, before N. W. Division.

In satisfying and serving the public, we are doing a great work in education. Not in the type of education to which that term is generally applied—schooling, set-study, etc.—but in something infinitely wider. When I say that we are doing great work in education, I mean that we are playing an important part in cultivating the intelligence of the public, and intelligence is essential to the art of living. This wider education is never finished, and it is our purpose to provide help and materials towards its development. “The man who reads books is a better man than the man who does not bother his head about books at all,” says Mr. J. R. Clynes, to which it might be added, that the cultured mind gets more out of life than the uncultured mind can even comprehend. Libraries used intelligently help people to *live*—which is without doubt the noblest of all arts.

The work before us is great and difficult and it has been suggested that we should be far more successful in realising our ideals if we adopted some scheme of co-operation to link up the activities of our various libraries, which to-day are serving as isolated institutions, and worked for the common good.

The first co-operative scheme that comes into the mind is the oft discussed Co-operative Cataloguing, and here I shall propose only a few general remarks.

At present much time and labour are needlessly expended for want of suitable co-operation in the process of cataloguing that might, with profit, be devoted to other departments of library economy. The same books are constantly being purchased by hundreds of different libraries and catalogued by each independently, for the most part on very similar lines, with the result that labour is wasted to a really astonishing extent.

The process of cataloguing is one of the most important duties of the librarian—reducing a mere collection of books to an orderly whole, and making it readily available to the public—in other words, making a collection of books into a “*library*.” To a small library, having to exploit its stock to the fullest possible extent, the quality of the cataloguing is of paramount importance, yet in many cases it is comparatively neglected, owing generally, I suppose, to the many and various duties that fall to the lot of the librarian with few (or no) trained assistants. This cataloguing must be well done, full, and amply annotated (and annotation is probably the most abused task of the librarian).

The formation of a Central Cataloguing Bureau, staffed by expert cataloguers, cataloguing each book once and for all time, the entries printed on standard cards or slips and sold to libraries at a nominal charge, would seem to fill a great gap. The cost need not be large, it has been estimated as low as £10 per annum.

I do not mean to go over all the stock arguments either for or against, they are too well known, the disadvantages of such a scheme

being principally, the loss of time in cataloguing, printing entries, and sending them out, the difficulty of arriving at a code of cataloguing and annotation rules suitable to all (a distinct difficulty), and the necessary loss of originality. The actual process of cataloguing books also gives a knowledge of the "insides" of many books, perhaps not otherwise to be so well obtained. The first difficulty could, perhaps, be overcome by obtaining advance copies of new publications.

Inter-library loaning is a subject that has been much to the fore recently. It is undoubtedly one of the greatest problems facing us. Our collections of books are not complete, probably never will be, but other libraries could fill the gaps. Now in this connection it is argued that if any system of mutual co-operation existed between the various libraries of the country it would be possible for one library to borrow books it could not supply itself from other libraries. At the present time almost every library is willing to meet the occasional requests of other libraries, but as yet, I think, such requests are few and far between. Three particular libraries, I believe, have arranged an inter-loaning scheme. Three particular industries are carried on in each town, and each having nucleus collections, one specialises in cotton, another in paper-making, and another in engineering.

They exchange catalogues, and by means of telephone communications, each town has reasonable access to all three collections.

This all seems very fine on the surface, but on careful consideration I do not think the scheme is very much to be commended. In the first case if all three industries are carried on to any large extent in each town, each library from almost every conceivable point of view ought to specialise as far as possible in all three subjects. This may seem to be a waste, but I think that the very nature of a library demands it in these circumstances. At any moment one library may be asked for books or information which are stored in the other library, and time and service would be lost in the process of transfer. I have found (I think we all have found) that to be successful we must supply this sort of demand at the earliest possible moment, strike when the iron is hot, as it were, to obtain the best results. It is also quite possible, quite probable in fact, that even when a book is stocked at a particular library, it may be loaned out to another library 20 miles away. A general adoption of this scheme might also give libraries an excuse for neglecting sections to which they ought to give very careful attention.

In fact, I am not at all sure that I agree in any way with inter-library loaning as a general practice. Prof. Sandbach, in a paper read at the last Library Association Conference, gave some excellent reasons for its adoption, but I think he failed to give some still more excellent reasons against its adoption. We must remember, however, that his remarks applied more particularly to University Libraries, which is a different proposition. Inter-library loaning would resolve itself into small libraries borrowing from larger ones, and, as hinted before,



would probably result in smaller libraries not purchasing many books they ought to. I should imagine that such large library systems as Manchester and Liverpool would have a very uncomfortable time. It is argued again that books could be loaned to other libraries which are not likely to be called for very often—but I venture to suggest that there are but few libraries, even the largest ones, so well financed as to supply books which are little called for, no matter how good they be, and still fewer libraries can afford accommodation for dead weight. At present we find it hard enough to satisfy our own ever-increasing demands. It is all very well to say that this is a narrow and parochial view, but until we can supply, and adequately supply, our own local demands, we have but little right to supply outside demands.

Nevertheless we are faced with the fact that many extremely valuable standard books are too expensive for most libraries to buy. The call for many of these may be small in the majority of libraries, but all ought to have access to them. We cannot anticipate with any certainty our future demands, and an occasional enquiry to the Central Library for Students has proved extremely useful. This, it seems to me, is where we shall have to look for an equitable solution to the problem. Not to the present library, which is undoubtedly doing good work, but to a greater development of the idea.

If a Central Library for students were formed to cover the needs of each county, or more equitable areas, we could get a good service at a comparatively small cost, which would save what is, in many cases needless duplication.

There are many difficulties attached to the scheme. A book selection committee would have to be set up, which would have no mean task to perform in satisfying all, and matters of subscriptions and terms would have to be covered.

The Net Books question has been a very trying problem for over twenty years—it is to-day! Public Libraries at the present time, at all times in fact, have to make the best possible use of the money available for books, and before the limited incomes of many libraries book selection becomes something more than a fine art, principles becoming a sheer impossibility. Public Libraries spend many thousands of pounds each year on books, and yet they receive no more consideration, from a point of view of price, than does the ordinary person who spends perhaps only two shillings. Discount, even 5 or 10 per cent., would make a great deal of difference to our purchases.

In any other trade the same does not apply. If we bought 200 barrels of apples we should expect infinitely better prices than if we bought one pound, in fact, we should *get* better prices. But not so in the book trade.

The present position is just this. For ordinary retail purposes the bookseller must set up a shop in a prominent street, fit it up as attractively as possible, fill it with a costly stock much of which may be left



unsold in his shelves, pay intelligent assistants, overhead charges and the like, and risk bad debts. He often has difficulty in tracing books required, and much time wasted by inquisitive people. Therefore, for ordinary retail purposes we must admit he needs a good percentage on his turn-over. But in supplying the public library he has none of these things to face. He simply gets our orders, which give correct author, title, publisher, price, and other details, sends them away to his agency, makes out his bills, and sends on parcels to the Library. He may go to the trouble of affixing his own labels, of course !

It is argued that we are not wholesale buyers, as the trade understands the term, in so far that we do not order many copies of each book. Now in Warrington, we spend about a thousand pounds each year on books, some libraries spend ten thousands and more, which is surely enough to get discount.

Some ten or more years ago it was suggested that we form a Central Book Purchasing Bureau which would buy for all libraries in the kingdom. Under these circumstances we would buy probably a thousand or more copies of many books, which would surely be wholesale buying. I would like to bring this scheme forward again, as a means of obtaining preferential terms.

A prominent bookseller's traveller when discussing this problem with me some little time ago, argued that the cost of administering such a department (getting in orders from libraries, salaries, upkeep of buildings, and the like), would run away with all the profit. Personally however, I cannot see it. If booksellers can make it pay, and we would trade in infinitely more books than do many booksellers, it seems to me we could make it a profitable undertaking.

There are many sidelines which ought to be developed in any proper discussion of this subject, and I regret having to run away from it, but I do so hoping the discussion will bring out many additional points.

Among other co-operative schemes suggesting themselves to us, in this connection, are central book-binding departments, from which we could get specialised work done at first cost—interchangeability of borrowers tickets, allowing borrowers to use libraries no matter how far or how often they travel—training colleges for assistants in each county—registration of librarians—comprehensive scheme of library advertising—possibility of having a special daily talk on the wireless—schemes of lectures and the like—all of which run on a large scale would be a good deal cheaper and possibly more efficient than at present.

In my paper thus far I have been interested mainly in co-operative schemes, mentioning where co-operation is possible, and running here, there, and everywhere in a very disjointed sort of way. I have agreed that in most cases co-operation and linking up of the library activities of the country would help libraries individually to work far more

smoothly and efficiently than at present, and in furthering what has been aptly termed, "The Library Idea."

At the present time the public library is essentially a local institution bounded and penned in, as it were, by its own local boundary, so that the wider and higher scope of the work is not quite so strong and ever present as it might be. There are many anomalies in extent of income, one library having twice the income of another in a town of the same size, and the people outside the larger towns having but little facility for using libraries at all.

Now the question which forces itself upon us, is whether or no it would be advantageous from a point of view of efficiency, scope and service, to unify Library aims and methods by placing Public Libraries under a central authority; that is by adopting a system of nationalisation. This question was discussed some fifteen or more years ago with much energy and enthusiasm, especially in relation to London, and small co-operative schemes were even instituted, only, it would seem, to fall back among the experiments and discussions of the past recorded in the pages of the Library Association Record. Parenthetically, I might add that a reading of the back numbers of Library Journals will prove the oft-quoted adage that there is nothing new under the sun.

Since the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1919, supplemented by the report on adult education, and the conjectures upon the result of the present Departmental Committee on Public Libraries, the idea seems to have awakened from its gentle sleep. Perhaps the idea was fostered by the powers the act gives to County Councils to adopt the Public Libraries Acts for their particular areas, and with the help of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees has certainly resulted in the unification of Rural areas, which is one step forward. The act in its suggestion of education committee control caused much controversy and dissent, the suggestion losing sight of the fact that Librarianship is a very specialised and skilled profession, requiring hard work and study, and not to be made a toy for experimental educationalists who are little in sympathy with the aims and ideals of the work.

The resulting Rural Libraries are well worth consideration as an example of co-operative work. Up to the present I think it must be admitted that they have not been a very conspicuous success. The schemes are yet in their infancy, however, and perhaps cannot be fairly judged, but I think that the larger towns could have given far more and better services to villages in the near vicinity.

On the outskirts of Warrington there are about a dozen parishes, all within about a couple of miles of this Town Hall, which unfortunately are not yet within the borough. These parishes now come under County Council control, and are served by the Rural Libraries scheme—that is they have collections of 60 to 200 books, mostly fiction,

which are changed once or twice a year. Some little time ago, my chief, Mr. McAdam, submitted a scheme offering Library facilities to these parishes. The proposal was briefly this: The parishes would pay a library rate of 1d. in the £ towards upkeep, and in return, we would establish delivery stations in each parish, containing 500-1,000 books, with exchanges and requests once, twice, or even six times a week. This is quite a different proposition, especially when it is considered that there is a large central library quite conveniently near to supply out of the way requirements. We have at present a system of such stations doing very good work in the out-districts. The scheme was not accepted, so the Cheshire parishes have a box from the County Library, and I am not aware of any sort of arrangement yet in the Lancashire area. When I was at Bolton, I noticed exactly the same possibilities. So much for Rural Libraries.

Although, in general, libraries are now well administered, it would seem that all could be more efficiently managed if they had the benefits of unrestricted co-operation.

The placing of all libraries under a central authority would certainly mean close co-operation and uniformity of methods.

Co-operation is a worthy object—in commerce, in education, in fact in almost every walk of life, it has been found indispensable to success. The Library Association and this Association are great co-operative agencies for bringing the library movement up to a higher plane of efficiency—the latter Association succeeding, I think. The Library Association has issued a co-operative Cataloguing Code, *meant* to do away with the many and various methods of cataloguing and get one scheme recognised throughout the country. It examines students in library practice, the idea being not only to make efficient librarians, but to unify methods of administration. Leather for book-binding, Subject Index to Periodicals, and the like, show the same spirit.

Under a scheme of nationalisation the greatest possible extent of co-operation could be realised. Uniformity of hours, rules and regulations, cataloguing, classification, in fact in every department of library activity. The money available for library purposes would perhaps be evenly distributed—whether the distribution would be regulated by issue, population, etc., would be a rather interesting problem I think—and the whole population of the country whether living in small villages or large towns would be equally well provided for.

Perhaps the whole would be made a department of the Board of Education, having its own Director, County or Divisional Directors, town Librarians, perhaps also a Library Commission consisting of experts specialised in various administrative departments to tour libraries. All the work centralised and organised on a large scale in the most economic manner.

All this sounds very nice and smooth—but is this uniformity and co-operation nationally controlled possible? If so, is it desirable?

Does uniformity mean the red tape and stilted methods so typical of many government departments, methods which annoy rather than satisfy? The other day I was asking a particular question in a post office. The official, in his best official manner, got a well thumbed volume which took him ten minutes to find, waded through a too well compiled index for about half an hour, finally saying in a funny sort of way, "Er . . . No." I wonder if under nationalisation we should have a 2,000 page list of instructions!

However, Nationalisation would certainly suggest a lack of individuality. We cannot dispute the tremendous amount of work achieved by the enthusiasm of individual librarians. It must be admitted that many of the finest methods and systems have been instituted by librarians having full control and having the work of their libraries at heart.

The present is rich with opportunity, and the personal touch of the Librarian and his staff, their knowledge of readers and locality, their enthusiasm and energy, are very much needed if the best results are to be obtained. Mechanical librarians would be fatal.

In the future I think Nationalisation is inevitable. If it means unrestricted co-operation and wider spheres—if it means a control that allows the librarian scope not only for intelligent administration, but for wide development and creative energy, then I think it would mark a new era, not only in our profession, but in the pleasures, comforts, and intellectual development of our fellow men.

(The above paper, and the discussion which followed, were the causes of the remarks about the present-day assistant by the Editorial writer in the *Library World*.—Ed.)

### EASTER VACATION SCHOOL IN LIBRARIANSHIP, FLORENCE, 1926.

The London University School of Librarianship in co-operation with the department of Phonetics, held a vacation school at Florence from the 29th March to the 10th April. Dr. E. A. Baker, the director of the School of Librarianship, was the organiser for the University, whilst Dr. Harold Goad, director of the British Institute at Florence, undertook the Italian arrangements, including the difficult task of finding suitable accommodation.

The school, consisting of more than eighty members, left Victoria on the morning of the 26th of March. After an adventurous journey, be-starred with heated altercations with brigands disguised as ticket

collectors and station masters parading as Brigadier Generals, the party arrived in Florence. One noted with relief, that despite the present system in Italy, of instant fines for slight infringements of railway regulations, it is still permitted to gaze out of the window.

Lectures were held at the British Institute, housed in the charming Palazzo Antinori, one of the smaller palaces of Florence. The course consisted of ten lectures on each of three different subjects, delivered by members of the teaching staff of the School of Librarianship. Dr. Baker lectured on "Contemporary English Poetry," Mr. Berwick Sayers on "Administrative problems," and Mr. Sanderson on "Methods of Library Provision." A course of after-dinner lectures on Florentine history, architecture, painting and sculpture were delivered by Dr. Goad, and others, including Mr. Martin Shaw Briggs the well-known authority on Italian architecture. The lecturer on Phonetics was Mr. Lloyd-James.

The charm of Florence ever renews itself. On every hand are reminders of the re-birth of art and learning in which Florence played perhaps the most important part. Here, under the patronage of rich merchant families the arts "waxed strong and grew in grace," an example to the modern American who visits Florence with such assiduity. From the backgrounds of the old Italian paintings one sees that Florence has changed very little since the days of the Medici. And somehow the spirit of Florence lingers still in modern Florence, caught perhaps under the wide overhanging eaves of the tall houses that stand in such narrow streets. There cannot be quite such another city in the world, so rich in the treasures of artistic expression. And yet, despite the constant influx of visitors, she does not become cosmopolitan, but remains herself. The school motored to Siena (*via* St. Gimignano), and to Pisa, visiting Lucca and Pistola, on the return journey. These cities are but further reminders of what Italy and particularly the north of Italy has given to the arts, and how far western civilisation is indebted to her.

From one aspect, the school was a great success. If the attendance at lectures was below the average, it must be borne in mind that a large number of the party were not connected in any way with Librarianship, and that the allurements of Florence were too strong to be resisted. Dr. Baker and Dr. Goad, with others who assisted in making the school a success, were thanked and made a suitable presentation at a violin recital given by Mrs. Lloyd James on one of the last days that the school met.

It cannot be over emphasised, that the school owed a great debt to the directors and staff of the British Institute, who did everything possible in making arrangements and placed the Institute at our entire disposal.

In the absence of Dr. Baker, the party was piloted across Europe by Mr. M. S. Briggs, and a successful vacation school brought to a close.

J. G. O'L.

### THE LIBRARIAN OF THE CITY OF LONDON RETIRES.

The good wishes of all engaged in library work will go out to Mr. Bernard Kettle, on his retirement from the Librarianship of London's Corporation Library, which he has served faithfully for forty-six years. For long Mr. Kettle has been a familiar figure at Association meetings, his contributions to discussions always being of a breezy nature. While possibly he is not so well known personally to the majority of the present generation of assistants, he has ever taken a warm interest in the A.A.L., always lending a sympathetic ear to any appeals for assistance in the arrangement of meetings, and encouraging officers and council with kindly words combined with friendly counsel. Mr. Kettle succeeded to the chief office after thirty years' service, following Mr. Borrajo who filled the position after the retirement of the late Charles Welch, and he has devoted himself entirely to consolidating and developing the library and its organisation. His enthusiasm for London history and topography led to the adoption of the most painstaking methods for ensuring that every possible record was maintained; record, not merely of the past, but what is equally important, though sometimes overlooked, record of current events. The Guildhall collections in this respect have profited enormously through his activities, and future historians will find their tasks greatly simplified as a consequence. The work has been done as a conscientious discharge of duty, not as a means for personal aggrandisement, and Mr. Kettle would probably be the last to claim any special credit for what has been achieved. How many writers of books on London history Mr. Kettle has helped will probably never be known, though some—including Mr. Charles G. Harper—have acknowledged their indebtedness to him. It seems a pity that Mr. Kettle is not going to employ his leisure on some aspect of the City's history, but it appears that he intends occupying himself with the history and bibliography of the game of croquet; which is at least characteristic of him! In addition, he will maintain his Honorary Treasurership of the Library Association, which will keep him in touch with his professional confrères, who have known and respected him so long. That he may be spared to enjoy living his own life for many years, will be the hearty and sincere wish of all who know him, either personally or by repute.

W. B. T.

## THE DIVISIONS.

NORTH EAST DIVISION—*contd.*

The North East Division has endeavoured to combine the strictly professional and the wider literary interest, with some measure of success. The speaker alluded to the successful effort of the Newcastle staff to produce a magazine, and he hoped that the effort in the near future would not be confined to one staff, but would develop into a Divisional Magazine, and be "a medium for creative work on the part of members."

Mr. Smettem next replied to the oft-asked question: "What is the good of the Association?" He reminded his audience first of the new educational activity on behalf of members, pointing out that an additional value lay in the fact that assistants by joining could help to develop this movement, and mould it in accordance with their own wishes. Next he pointed to the benefit to be derived from meetings to which we could attract people interested in library work. "But first we must have interest and enthusiasm. Meetings have been described by some members as dull proceedings, but we shall only brighten these by what we contribute as individuals, and it is up to the members themselves to make them interesting and attractive. It is regrettable if we look upon our attendance at the meetings of the Division as a duty. Surely the interest which was shown in the past on questions touching our welfare, should continue with increasing force. In the old days I have attended meetings at which discussion on some subjects was so keen (indeed I should say fierce), that I sometimes wondered whether the calm and sedate colleagues of my duty hours were the same persons to whom I was listening with wonder, mixed with awe. In those days the majority of the members were males. To-day the female members predominate; and I am sure that they will not allow the charge to be made that they have been responsible for the lack of fire which has characterised some of our meetings. I make my appeal to them for support in maintaining the traditions of the Division. I feel sure many of them have something to say, and the ability to say that something well. On the occasions upon which a few have favoured us with their views, they have impressed by their freshness, common-sense, and charm. I trust that these outbursts will become more general, for, Ladies, you are in the majority, and the success of our activities rests very largely with you."

In conclusion, Mr. Smettem mentioned an important matter for consideration in the near future. "I think your Committee might consider a new basis of subscription for associate members. The substitution of the age basis for one of salary is, in many cases, unfair, and we shall be glad to have the observations of members on this point, with a view to instructing our Divisional Representative as to the attitude of the Division on it."

A vote of thanks to the retiring Chairman, Mr. W. E. Hurford, and to the retiring Hon. Secretary, Mr. I. Briggs, wound up a successful meeting.

## NORTH-WESTERN DIVISION.

## LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT BRANCH.

A most successful meeting of the Liverpool and District Branch was held at the Waterloo Public Library on March 19th. Refreshments were kindly provided by the Libraries' Committee; and an opportunity afforded to inspect the various departments of the library. At the subsequent meeting, Councillor W. Hayes (Chairman of the Libraries' Committee) presided over an attendance of 55 members, and was supported by Lt.-Col. W. Longbottom, D.S.O., J.P. (Chairman of the Waterloo-with-Seaforth Council), Councillors Caird, Bamber,



Howson, Jamieson, McIver, West and Williams, and Miss K. Fearnside (Librarian). The Chairman accorded a cordial welcome to the Association; and the evening was devoted to the reading of twelve short papers on "What I think of my Profession." The contributors were the Misses Ackroyd, Ballantyne, Bowen, Edwards, Greenwood, Lawler, Pilling, Pugh and Stapleton, and Messrs. Bioletti, Carr and Stratton. All the papers were of a high order of merit, and each very cleverly outlined the views of the writer. For the most part the profession seemed to be very favourably regarded, but in several instances there were complaints to make. The papers of the gentlemen contributors contained references to the fact that the remuneration left much to be desired, a view which was shared by several of the ladies. The speakers emphasized the importance of their calling, and maintained that the public did not sufficiently realise the important nature of the duties performed. The many opportunities for service were commented on, and particular stress was laid on the unlimited attractions of Public library work amongst children.

A ballot was taken to decide the winner, and the prize (a book) was awarded to Miss D. Stapleton, Garston Branch Library, Liverpool. An additional prize in the form of a box of chocolates was most kindly presented to Miss Stapleton by Councillor Hayes.

During the evening Lt.-Col. W. Longbottom and Councillor A. G. Jamieson addressed the meeting, and the former, after welcoming the visitors on behalf of the Council, remarked that "this gathering reminds me of the fact that I was once a librarian. Together with my regiment, I was near Palestine, and as there was nothing particular to do, it was decided to form a library, and I was appointed librarian. We accumulated about 300 books, and after we left Palestine, they travelled with us to France. The last I saw of them was when I left Germany in 1919. If they are still in Germany I hope they have done some good."

A hearty vote of thanks was conveyed to the Chairman and Libraries' Committee, to Miss Fearnside and her staff, and to the Council on the proposition of Mr. E. C. Wickens, seconded by Mr. R. Howarth, Messrs. W. A. Phillips and R. Cochran also took part. Thus concluded one of the most enjoyable and profitable meetings ever held by the Association; and we desire to place on record our appreciation of Waterloo's generous hospitality.

An interesting function was held at the Reference Library, Liverpool, on March 27th, to mark the retirement on superannuation, after 51 years' service, of Mr. W. E. Jones, Depot Librarian. At a large gathering of colleagues, presentations were made to Mr. Jones, of a cheque and a suitably inscribed walking stick, together with a brooch for Mrs. Jones. Mr. G. T. Shaw, M.A., Chief Librarian, in making the presentations, referred to the esteem in which Mr. Jones was held, and the excellent service he had rendered, and conveyed the best wishes of the staff for his future welfare, Mr. Jones suitably responded. Mr. Jones has been a member of the Association for many years, and served for a short time, during the period of the War, as Secretary of the Branch Association.

R. COCHRAN.

#### APPOINTMENTS.

- \*PARSONS, R. W., Bradford Public Libraries to be Deputy Librarian.
- \*STANLEY-SMITH, Miss M. C., Croydon Public Libraries, to be Senior Assistant, Kent County Library. Salary, £160-£200.

\* Member A. A. L.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH.

- Brown (Ford K.). *Life of William Godwin.* (Dent, 16/-)  
A readable and impartial account of one of the most foolishly-wise men who ever existed.—*The Nation*.
- Dane (Clemence). *Granite* : a play. (Heinemann, 6/-)
- Dunsany (Lord). *The Charwoman's Shadow* : a novel. (Putnam, 7/6)
- Hedin (Sven). *My Life as an Explorer.* (Cassell, 25/-)  
This account of the famous explorer's life makes a fascinating travel book.
- Hurst (Fanny). *Appassionata* : a novel. (Cape, 7/6)
- Kernahan (Coulson). *Six Famous Living Poets.* (Butterworth, 7/6)  
*Contents* :—Masefield ; Kipling ; Newbolt ; Baring ; Noyes ; Drinkwater. Originally published in 1922.
- Lucas (F. L.). *Authors Dead and Living* : essays. (Chatto-Windus 7/6)
- Magnus (Laurie). *Dictionary of European Literature.* (Routledge, 25/-)
- Masefield (John). *Odtaa* : a novel. (Heinemann, 7/6)
- Morley (Christopher). *Thunder on the Left* : a novel. (Heinemann, 7/6)  
If there is a better novel, then it will be an unusual year, I like this book . . . better than any modern work of American fiction that I can recall.  
—H. M. Tomlinson.
- Murphy (Gwendolen). *A Cabinet of Characters.* (Oxford Univ. Pr., 12/6)  
An excellent selection of characters ranging from the works of Theophrastus to Galsworthy.
- Nicolson (Harold). *Swinburne.* (Macmillan, 5/-)  
The first of a new set of volumes which are to be added to the English Men of Letters Series.

G. F. V.

## ARABIA DESERTA.

The publication by Jonathan Cape, Ltd., of Charles M. Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, complete in one volume, with all the original maps, plans and illustrations, and an introduction by Colonel T. E. Lawrence, at the modest price of thirty shillings, is an event of singular interest to all lovers of real literature.

This wonderful travel book, one might almost say the most wonderful in the English language, was first published in 1888, and although it sold slowly, it had long been out of print, when Mr. Edward Garnett edited an abridged edition which was published by Messrs. Duckworth in 1908 ; at this time a copy of the original edition, when obtainable, cost thirty pounds.

In 1921, Mr. Jonathan Cape published a second edition in two volumes, at nine guineas, in 1923, a new and cheaper edition was published at three guineas, and now in 1926, we have this masterpiece offered to us for thirty shillings.

As *The Observer* said, in January last: "Charles Montagu Doughty was one of the great men of our day, the author of a unique prose masterpiece. For many readers it is a book so majestic, so vital, of such incomparable beauty of thought, of observation, and of diction, as to occupy a place apart among their most cherished literary possessions."

Having discussed this publication of *Arabia Deserta* with a few enthusiasts, I am of opinion that there are many assistants and librarians who would like to possess this volume, but are not in a position to pay the thirty shillings in one sum.

With a desire to encourage, not only the reading, but the possession of good literature, the Council has decided to assist its members by helping them to obtain this book on the instalment system, at no extra cost. The first payment will be five shillings, followed by five monthly instalments of similar amounts. All who are interested in this unique experiment should write to Mr. G. F. Vale, Public Library, Bethnal Green, London, E. 2., enclosing the initial deposit of five shillings, and the book will be forwarded.

G. F. V.

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#### OUR LIBRARY.

Arnett, L. D. *Elements of Library Methods*. 4 illus. 225 pp. 8½-in. by 6½-in. 1925. (Stechert).

The substance of a course of instruction that has been given for some years at the West Virginia University, U.S. "The purpose has been, first, to provide an opportunity for students who desire to study the subject for the sake of using the library to better advantage; and second, for those preparing to teach in high schools, but who also want some knowledge of library methods and work." Though admittedly elementary, this work covers a wide field fairly thoroughly; short lists of references as well as questions appear at the end of each chapter. The book, printed in Germany, is well produced but lacks a list of the illustrations.

Kensington Public Libraries. *Classified List of Works on Literature*. Ed. by William Wadley. 180 pp. 8½-in. by 5½-in. 1926. Wrappers. No price.

Not exactly what its title suggests, but a catalogue embracing the whole of Dewey's Literature class. It represents the resources of a central and two branch lending libraries, and is an example of a classified catalogue applied to indicator libraries. The books are classified fully by Dewey, which is used practically as he is represented in the 11th edition of his classification; the

whole displays to advantage a very valuable collection of books. As an old Kensingtonian one may be permitted to congratulate the editor upon his departure from the old form of dictionary catalogue for which the Royal Borough was famed, with its extravagant duplication of entries as well as cost, for we can remember when this single catalogue would have been three. Generally speaking the entries are unannotated except in the many cases where contents notes are added to collections of essays, collected works, etc. Biographies are classified at the predominating head, Dickens at 823.83, Ruskin at 824.86, etc. We like the little extension of 821.08 to accommodate special anthologies, as 821.0892—love, 821.0899—sport, 821.0897—the sea, etc.

Our only quarrel is with the index. Where more than a single entry is to be made under an author we do think short titles of works should be included. Gosse for instance, has 9 numbers, Symons has 7, Scott has 7. We can imagine and excuse the language of the reader who hunts up the 9 or 7 numbers only to find the book *he* wants is not there. There is a synopsis of the class at the beginning of the catalogue, but experience proves that readers don't read synopses, explanations, etc., as a rule. However, these are details, and we would rather end on a note of congratulation on the general excellence and value of the catalogue. S.

## CARNEGIE UNITED KINGDOM TRUST.

### TWELFTH ANNUAL REPORT.

Though called the Twelfth Annual Report, this volume contains the record of the second quinquennium of a systematic and definite policy pursued by the Trustees. Librarians are apt to think of the Trust as concerned with libraries first and foremost. That is wrong. A perusal of this report will show that there is little in the whole field of social development that does not, or has not, come within the purview of the Trust. Experimental and pioneer work is preferred to the assistance of existing services. In this we think that the Trust is right, for it is clearly impossible for local authorities to explore unaided and maybe with possible failure and its consequences. Yet this policy may, though we hope not, have results similar to those referred to in the report—lack of support when the local authority takes over. "It is unfortunately clear that many of the Carnegie Public Libraries are insufficiently supported by the rates. Purchase of books is in these cases manifestly inadequate; salaries are too low to attract competent librarians; circulation shows that from these two causes public interest is at a low ebb." A strikingly true statement. Bumble does not like paying for any institution which does not bring him in any actual money; in fact, he thinks he ought to be paid for allowing the service. Hence the Cinderellas.

When the Trust's library efforts near completion, one can envisage a public library system throughout the country resembling one vast spider's web instead of appearing as it does now, a mass of unrelated dots.

The report is crowded with pages of extremely interesting and instructive matter that should be read by all librarians and assistants. The space at our disposal precludes dealing at length with all the activities of the Trust. Suffice it to say that we are convinced that no other organisation exists which is more likely to accomplish so much in the sphere of social and intellectual development as the body whose report we have under review. C.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

COVENTRY PUBLIC LIBRARIES,  
12th April, 1926.

DEAR SIR,—I see that Mr. McColvin (in the March issue of THE LIBRARIAN seems inclined to belittle the literary knowledge of library assistants. He states that in the dim and distant past when he was young (not so long ago surely), he remembers juniors who only read books of the W. W. Jacobs or "Dracula" type, and presumably could only recommend such. I do not dispute his statement, but I do disagree with him when he goes on to say that it is improbable that the tastes of the average assistant have improved since then. If Mr. McColvin really believes that, I can only think he has been most unfortunate in the assistants with whom he has come into contact. The taste of the average assistant to-day is good; much better than twenty years ago, when Mr. McColvin was still at school. He has decided that some scheme for bringing assistants into contact with better literature must be devised. May I suggest that he makes his scheme suitable for training some of the scores of librarians who are even more ignorant of good literature. Has he forgotten what the Psalmist says: "Out of the mouth . . ." ? I think he must have, for he is certainly on the wrong "track" in this case.

Yours faithfully,

HARRY SARGEANT.

## NOTICE.

THE HISTORY OF THE 2/6TH (RIFLE) BATTALION "THE KING'S" (LIVERPOOL REGIMENT), 1914-1919. By Capt. C. E. WURTZBURG, M.C. (Adjutant, November 1916-November 1918). In one Quarto Volume of 384 pages, with Frontispiece Photograph, 16 maps, and 32 illustrations in monochrome. Bound in full cloth, lettered gold.

A number of surplus copies of the above-mentioned book are available for distribution among the Public Libraries of Great Britain. Application should be made to the Chief Librarian, Public Libraries, Liverpool, enclosing 1s. 2d. per copy to cover cost of packing and postage. Copies for Branches may also be applied for.

## NEW MEMBERS.

MIDLAND DIVISION: *Associates*.—Miss A. G. Lynes (Coventry); Miss A. B. Hill (Birmingham).

NORTH-EAST DIVISION: *Members*.—Miss M. Huck (Darlington), Miss R. Browne, Miss N. Trotter, and C. J. Zanetti (Newcastle).

YORKSHIRE DIVISION: *Associate*.—A. Joyce (Sheffield). *Members*.—J. Walker and L. White (Sheffield); Miss W. Dean (Ilkley).